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April 14, 2020

Senator Lisa Murkowski
510 L Street
Suite 600
Anchorage, AK 99501

Dear Senator Murkowski,

I am writing to you as a follow up on behalf of Wolf Creek Boatworks, which is located on Prince of Wales Island, in Southeast Alaska. The parcel is known as the *Hollis Parcel*.

A hearing was held on Wednesday, April 8, 2010 hosted by the U.S. Forest Service by teleconference. There were representatives from the USFS, Alaska Mental Health Land Trust, Organized Village of Kasaan, Alaska Association for Historic Preservation, Inc. (AAHP), Mr. Sam Romey, owner of Wolf Creek Boatworks, and others. (Please see attached contact list.)

We learned a bit more about the history of the boatworks and how it comes to find itself in this situation. At the time that the boatworks was in the process of renewing its permit, the staff person who was working on this relocated to Juneau for a new position. The USFS Ranger at that time, took over the review and summarily determined that there was no existing business and therefore declined the request for the permit renewal.

Mr. Romey had provided a lot of documentation to prove that the boatworks was a viable business and had existed for a number of years at that location. All of this documentation was apparently disregarded or never reviewed.

Today, Mr. Romey finds himself about to be evicted from his property by virtue of a land transfer to the Alaska Mental Health Land Trust Office. Congress has mandated that the lands be transferred unencumbered to the land trust, which means that Mr. Romey must remove all buildings and equipment from the site.

There is no way to move these buildings and improvements to another location. Where would he find a nearby creek to power his equipment? Therefore, all of the improvements and the investment that Mr. Romey has made over the years would be lost. This financial loss would greatly impact Mr. Romey.

The land that the boatworks sits on encompasses just 7 acres. It is situated along the shoreline of the island. There are creeks adjacent to the facility that are considered fish habitat. Logging may not be conducted within 100 feet of the shoreline nor can logging be conducted within 300 feet of the creeks. Therefore, very little of the 7 acres can be logged. Destroying this historic site makes no sense for what little timber would be harvested from this site.

Mr. Romey has offered to trade land that he owns nearby for the facility or purchase the property. We learned during the hearing that the land and/or funds would have to be turned over to the state and not to the Mental Health Land Trust Office. While this would be a win-win for Mr. Romey, the state would be the entity profiting from this transaction. Nothing was mentioned implying that the

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land or funds could be transferred to the land trust by the state to make the land transfer “whole” after the transfer was completed. In addition, a representative from the land trust stated that they were not opposed to the boatworks remaining. However, they have no say in the matter since they don’t currently own the land.

As far as we can determine, there was never a Section 106 hearing on the property whereby the property could be considered an easement and thus, protected. This could have been another way the property could have been protected long ago.

The boatworks is a historic site. Mr. Romey had sent in an application to the National Register for Historic Places. He was asked to do some revisions on the application so that it could be presented to SHPO for approval. He is in that process now.

Alaska Association for Historic Preservation, Inc. (AAHP) accepts nominations for an annual statewide list of Ten Most Endangered Historic Properties. Mr. Romey has submitted his application and will be added to the 2020 list. AAHP has sponsored this annual list since 1991. We are concerned about historic properties and designating “endangered” historic properties is an important program. There is a national list to which we will nominate the Wolf Creek Boatworks along with another property for the nationwide 2021 Eleven Most Endangered Historic Properties.

I am including copies of emails that we have received so far in support of saving Wolf Creek Boatworks. This facility is not a hobby located in the middle of nowhere. It is a viable business that offers services that are important to local residents. You should know that losing the boatworks would have a financial impact on Mr. Romey and the owners of vessels living in the general area.

We are asking for your assistance in protecting Wolf Creek Boatworks in perpetuity. It is a historic place and an important part of Southeast Alaska’s history. Just as important, it is a viable business that supports the local area with its services.

It looks like the only possibility to preserve the boatworks is to have a bill introduced in congress that would allow the USFS to withdraw the 7 acres from the proposed land transfer so that the facility could remain intact under the continued ownership of Mr. Romey.

We are appealing to you for assistance to accomplish this before the end of the year. If you need additional information or have questions, please don’t hesitate to contact me. Mr. Romey may be contacted at: samromey@gmail.com or by phone 480.225.4761.

Thank you for your assistance.

Best Regards,

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